

WARFARE

FORTS

Few Lauans have seen heathen warfare. Lau did little fighting.

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War is called *i vulu*, which also means battle, army, battalion. It is also called the Evil (Tha), and the expression "the land is bad" means it is at war. Civil war is *veisei* (to migrate apart).

The villages of old were very small, surrounded by a moat. The plan could best be seen at the old village of Waitambu, which was known as Korotikindua (One-sided-village). It stood on a rocky eminence, Vatulingingi, by the sea. It was rather difficult of access, especially on the sea side, at which there was no moat; on the land side the moat was broad and semicircular, from the middle outwards branched off another ditch, which may possibly have communicated with an outer moat.

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Defences seem to have been repaired only when an attack was expected, when a stockade (*virimba*) was made, and the water bailed out. Besieging parties set up a rough fence of reeds called a white fence because reeds are white. For "besieging" Lauans use *kamba* (to climb).

ORACLES

If questioned about the ancient gods, a man will almost invariably describe how they were consulted before a war was undertaken. The following account has been received:

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Upon going to war, the ancient Lauans prepared large quantities of fermented food (*mandrai*)—the whole of Lakemba made a feast for the god Tui Lakemba, and each clan made a feast for its respective spirits. The people offered up a bunch of coconuts in the usual style (p. 70). The priest took them and rubbed them up and down and said:

"What are these coconuts?" They said:

"The coconuts of the war against Thithia. They are impudent. Let us have an answer whether they can be overcome or not."

The priest would say, "All right, I will go on ahead; three of the enemy will die in battle," and as he threw down the bunch, three nuts would fall off, or one or two as the case might be. Sometimes he said, "You will not kill (*rau*); some of you will die."

It was so with all the spirits. In Waitambu they would offer kava to the Wind Women (Matangi, p. 192); they lay down the kava root and clapped, and touching it said, "We have come, sirs, we who are in distress, because, sirs, of the army which is about to come. Be gracious and help us in the war. That is all we have come to you for." Then they clapped again, inclined the head and listened for an answer. The women said, "Go that you may conquer," at which they all clapped. If the women were angry they would speak evil and rate them: "You will be smitten," at which the people also clapped; they might not be angry with the Matangi.

PREPARATIONS

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When assistance was required from other tribes, a whale's tooth (*tauri-tambua*) would be sent. If the proposal were accepted, the whale's tooth was kept; if not, it was broken (*ndiri*). If the enemy heard of this he would offer the breaker of the tooth a bigger present to crush (*mbikai*) the first whale's teeth, and the two of them conspire against the instigator. When the war was over the people who had sent the whale's teeth held a festival (*solevu*) for the people who had fought for them.

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The chief weapon was the club (*malungu*): the type that almost alone survives at the present day is that which imitates the shape of a musket, and is the 14th figured by Williams (18, opp. p. 77). Nos. 1 and 7 are *manda* or straight clubs; Nos. 2 and 4 are *totokia*; Nos. 8, 10, 12 are *yamatha*; No. 9 the Western type of *nggata*, and No. 11 the Lauan; No. 17 is also a *nggata*; No. 13 is a *kiakava*.

I have seen no spears in Lakemba, and could not discover any charms to make them lucky. The old word for bow (*ndakai*) has come to mean musket, and the old bow has to be distinguished by the epithet "pulling." It seems to have disappeared entirely. The warriors painted their faces black with soot.

FIGHTING

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European witnesses confirm the impression given by the narratives that there were very few pitched battles. Primarily hostilities were carried on by treachery. A siege consisted mostly in sitting down before a place and uttering defiance; storming was rare. One Lauan thinks the Tongans were much braver. Fijians say warfare was active at night, when a man would go alone to surprise and kill his enemy. Such a man was called "ant's tooth" (*mbati kandi*).

Ambushes were called nets. The besieged having dug a tunnel and there put their women and children, allowed their enemy to come, then killed them. They would also make an offering (*i mandrali*) to the spirit concerning the white fence of the besiegers. The god would come up (*thambe*) and enter the priest and say, "Go, if you go tonight to attack the white fence I shall go with you, and you will be successful."

In the many stories of war I have which are not worth publishing these mighty men, heroes (*nggangga*) seem to be the pivot of the battle; if the hero is killed, his side collapses.

When a man slew an enemy he should give the battle cry of his clan (*i vakathavu*). The cry of Katumbalevu was *Mbukakanasinga*. Fire and Sun, or *Mbuka i singa*. The Sun for a fire, because, it is said, the god Tokairambe

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was in the habit of warming himself in the sun in the morning. The cry of Valelailai was *Sereivalu*, one of the god Tui Lakemba's names.

Captives are called *mbombula* (caught alive). They were despised. Should a man of Nasangalau who had been a captive come and speak in Tumbou he would be shut up with the words, "You are a captive." The custom of taking prisoners is said to be ancient. The Tongans of Lau in Christian times made prisoners on a large scale; whole villages were brought over to Lakemba to work for one to ten years, then the Lord of Naiau said, "Let So-and-so take them back to their village." Then a nobleman of Tumbou would take them home, build them houses, and come back. The captives would some day bring a feast in return.

VICTORY

For a slain enemy a drum was beaten (*lali ni mbakola*). Those who had slain a man blackened their faces, wore a train and a turban, and were finely dressed; they sat on the upper deck of the canoe, singing a *thimbi*: "To *alewa*, *tangane*, *veitho* [four times], *salia*." (Women's side, men's side, intermingle, passage [?]). In the West and in Thakaundrove the girls sang obscene songs called *ndele* thus:

You are like this
We are like this

alluding to sex.

The manslayer stands in the village with his club on his shoulder and the gentlemen and ladies come and place before him plentiful gifts, for which no return is expected. He is said to *thouvi* or *thovi*, and the gifts are termed *i thouvi* or *i thovi*. Then they give him a new name: Koroi or Dog, or Canoe, or comb of some big nobleman, thus Wanggaimalani, Seruimalani, meaning that Malani embarked upon him to be saved, or he combed things out so that nothing might be tangled, but Malani might pass. When a man had slain two or three men, he was called Shark; if six he was Tawakeono. Seven flags; if ten, Tawaketini. These were names of mighty men. Now Koroi is used of academic degrees.

A man saved by another remembered the deed, and sooner or later, it might be ten years, gave him plenty of stuff (*i yau*), and his descendants would remember it and save the descendants of that man. Such gifts were called the thing for a life (*ka ni mbula*). If a man saved the High Chief, Roko Sau would give him a daughter as wife, or give him land, and remember his family.

Peace is called *sautu*, from *sau*, chief, rule, sovereignty, and *tu*, standing, chief, state. The same word also means prosperity, plenty.

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From Matuku, Moala Islands, comes the following account of proceedings after the battle:

The clubs of the manslayers, on the day on which they were presented with gifts, are called *ngandro*; the manslayers run with them to the temple. For four nights they slept in a separate house. If one of them wanted badly to see his child, he would go up to his house, touch the child with a reed from outside, kiss the reed, and go back to the common house.

The chief then called Tumbunimalungu, now called Vaka (p. 223) would call out in the night, "The clubs are turned over." Then the conch was blown and all awakened. The clubs were not turned over; that was merely their way of doing. After four nights they went to bathe when everyone was asleep. The clubs were carried by Tumbunimalungu and the conch was blown. The people might not exclaim; if anyone did, he was *mokau*, that is, he would be killed in the next battle. On that day they carried the club round and slew any pig they chose, even though it belonged to the Roko Sau.

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Of old, only the old men, not the women and children, ate men.

and Tokalau where a man named Velana was killed. In the village of Tokalau 764
four stones, forming a rectangle, mark the spot where a man dropped dead.
A pile of stones at Toka, Fulanga, also mark a burial place.

Formerly, members of the deceased's clan would chop off their little fingers
with an adz.

WARFARE

The war complex in Lau was closely allied with the ancestor cult and the
concept of rank based on mana. Informants agree that warfare and fortified 726
villages were introduced into Lau by the immigrants who formed the chiefs'
phratry. It is said that before the migration from Viti Levu, the land people
lived peacefully together in scattered hamlets. A state of tension grew out
of the keen interclan and intervillage rivalry for prestige, enhanced by the
desire for power on the part of the warriors of the ranking noble clans.

Warfare in Lau usually took the form of raids between villages led by
rival war leaders of the chief group. Rivalry often centered around the desire 727
for women. The attacking party would capture a high ranking woman, per-
haps the wife of a chief from another village, and the affront would be met
by a counter attack.

Tales of warfare are full of treachery. The object was to outwit the
opponent and save one's own skin. To risk one's life was considered stupid.
Attacks were usually launched only by forces superior in strength to those of
the defendants. Otherwise an attempt was made to lure the leaders into
ambush and to attack them singly or in groups.

Great care was taken to insure the success of a raid. The attacking party
secured the assistance of relatives. If they planned to attack a village on
another island, the warriors used a related village on that island as their
landing place, base of supplies, and ally. The priest retired to the temple and
propitiated the war god (*kalou ni valu*). He made an offering of kava to 728
the god and he prayed to the god until he was possessed. He then took the
ceremonial club of the clan and stood it up on the handle in the center of
the god house. If the club stood up unsupported he knew that the god had
entered the weapons of the warriors and the raid would be successful. If it
fell down, the raid would not be successful, and the expedition was abandoned.

Four days before the attack the warriors held a meeting in the village,
and the war gong (*lali ni valu*) was sounded. It consisted of a hollow log of 533
taxola (*Terminalia catappa*) or *mbuambua* (*Guetarda speciosa*) wood about
1.5 meters long. Two men, each with two sticks, stood on opposite sides of 534
the gong and beat in unison. The first drummer was called *tau*, the second
vakataungande. The complicated, rhythmic war beat was called *nduki tu a* 726
lali ni mbakola. During the four days before the raid the men prepared their 834
weapons. Sexual intercourse and the stealing of property were forbidden

726 the warriors during this time. If any man broke the tabu he was obliged to
 [834] confess, otherwise the raid would be unsuccessful.

[411] The most important weapons were the club (*i malungu*), the spear (*moto*), the bow (*udakai tchitchi*), and the sling (*i rambo*).

712 Fortified villages were built for defense on high points along the ridges of limestone islands or at the summit of volcanic hills. On the limestone islands such villages were protected by a series of walls made of unworked stone which reinforced the natural fortifications and guarded all approaches to the fort. On volcanic islands they were protected by a series of ramparts of earth surmounted in times of war by fences of reeds. Some were surrounded by a moat. Ruins of defense walls, house platforms, and earth works may still be seen.

726 When nearing a village, the attacking party often sang a war chant. Occasionally the raiders set fire to the village. On returning from a raid, whether successful or not, the warriors took kava to the god house and presented it ceremonially to the priest. When victorious warriors returned to their own village with slain or captured enemies, they called out the titles of their weapons. All the men went to the chief's house and sang the song of victory (*thimbi*), ending with a yell. Meanwhile the war gong was beaten outside. If the leader or "strong man" of the enemy had been killed his head and penis were tied to a stick in front of the village or sent back to the defeated village as a gross insult.

727 [578] Then followed the feast of life (*i mburua ni mbula*), at which the bodies (*mbakola*) of enemies were eaten. If the leader of the enemy had been captured he was eaten. Other men and women were chosen because they were soft, young, and fat. This war feast was the concrete expression of victory. The bodies were eaten for revenge, to show the superiority of the conquerors over the vanquished and to secure mana from the enemy. The bodies were steamed whole in a large earth oven (*lovo ni mbakola*), and pigs and vegetable foods were also steamed for the feast. When all was ready the bodies were cut up and all the food was placed in baskets and set down outside the god house by the youngest men of the clan under the direction of the chief of crops. The priest in the god house was informed that the feast was ready. He presented it to the war god before the food was distributed. Special parts were served to the chief. Informants did not know, however, which parts these were. Each household took a share home, and the human flesh was consumed by the whole village—men, women, and children.

727 266 [252] After an unsuccessful raid a death feast (*i mburua ni mate*) was held. A village might appease the anger of a chief or of another village over some transgression, such as the stealing of a woman, by the ceremonial

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presentation of a gift of atonement (*i soro*). The gift might be whales' teeth, land, or a woman. 431
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The following war tale was told by Moto of Undu:

The Undu people were at war with Tokalau and Lomatchi. The strongest man from Lomatchi, called Tute, was leading the Tokalau and Lomatchi men. The Undu people said, "If you who are related to us spear us, why not also spear the Tokalau people?" Then Tute turned and speared the strongest of the Tokalau men. Before he speared him he said, "Taipioloa" (I am going to be your enemy). All the rest of the men from Tokalau ran away. 726
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RELIGION

CULT OF THE LAND PEOPLE

There was a marked difference between the beliefs and practices of the land people and the chiefs' group in Lau. The land people retained their beliefs and individuality in spite of the dominance of the immigrants. 173
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The most detailed information regarding the beliefs of the land people was obtained from Kambara. The land people of Kambara formerly believed they originated from the *ngingia* tree. They were the fruit of the *ngingia* (*vua ni ngingia*) and it was their forefather (*vu*). When the missionaries came they made fun of the land people for believing they were the fruit of the *ngingia* tree because this tree bears no fruit, but the land people insisted they were the fruit or offspring of the tree. Natives say there is only one *ngingia* tree on Kambara. The tree is called by the title *Vu* (Forefather). It grows near the beach north of Undu, the stronghold of the land people. It is kept free of underbrush and the men of Undu still offer ceremonial food and kava there in times of distress. The rite was last performed a few years ago when a severe drought threatened the island food supply.

Mosesi, a very old informant who was born on the recently deserted island of Wangava, said that the Wangava land people, who are closely related to the Kambara land people, originated in the *ngingia* tree just as the Kambarans did.

The forefather of the Kambara land people is incarnated in the red shark (*nggio ndamundamu*). It is the *wanggawangga ni vu* (canoe or vessel of the forefather). The red shark is the guardian of the land people. Its title is *Tui Natakala* or *Ratu*. A member of this group may not kill, harm, or eat it. The red shark is still propitiated by the land people with offerings on the beach or on a canoe at sea and its appearance is considered a good omen. 173
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The red rooster (*toa kula*) is the emblem of the Kambara land people, and it symbolizes power and strength. Its title is *Kula*. Formerly the land people were forbidden to kill or eat it.

The following information regarding the origin of the land people was obtained on other islands visited. 173

769 species of natural phenomena, that is trees, fish, and birds. At least half of the
 778 clans studied claimed possession of three species: a species of fish, bird, and
 618 tree. The remainder of the clans claimed one or two species, or said they
 had forgotten their species. Each species was regarded as clan property,
 sacred to the owners and respected by members of other clans. The natives
 believed that the soul (*yalo*) of the clan ancestor god appeared in the form
 of a specific fish or bird of the species owned by the clan. Therefore members
 [262] of the clan must not harm a member of the clan species. Informants agree
 that eating one would be like eating one of themselves and would cause the
 person doing so to become ill and die. They must propitiate the incarnation
 with offerings of food and kava. It is difficult to obtain information concern-
 ing clan animals and plants because many customs concerning them are no
 longer strictly observed. Moreover, there is a tabu on their names. The
 [552] generic name of the species belonging to a clan may not be uttered by members
 of another clan in the presence of the owners. Formerly if a member of
 another clan mentioned the names of a clan's incarnations in the presence of
 the owners he was eaten by them. However, each clan species has a title
 which is not tabu.

The main forefather of the Vuanikathu clan on Kambara was Lekutu
 Levu (Big Bush), a war god, formerly worshipped by the clan priest in the
 temple called Nai Langa Mbakola. He was propitiated with human sacrifices
 in the form of *mbakola* (human bodies to be eaten), with kava and first fruits.
 Lekutu Levu was consulted by the priest before a clan raid. The Vuanikathu
 warriors, when threatening to attack a village, would sing:

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 Sa vura ko Lekutu Levu!
 Toko luvemu!
 Toko luvemu!

The people of Lekutu Levu are coming!
 Hide your children!
 Hide your children!

The god of the Vuanikathu clan was incarnated in the *mavinda* (*Erythro-
 spermum polyandrum*) tree, the barracuda (*ongo*), and the *kaisevou* (a yellow-
 breasted bird). On Kambara the *mavinda* tree grows only at Longa Mavinda
 in the bush behind Naikelaanga on land belonging to the Vuanikathu clan.
 Vuanikathu keeps the land clear under the trees. The *mavinda* does not bear
 edible fruit but its fragrant flowers may not be picked or worn in wreaths.
 Even today a member of Vuanikathu may not catch or eat a barracuda. The
 clan members formerly prayed to the barracuda, not in the god house, but
 in the dwelling house. *Kaisevou* birds are caught by clan members, rubbed
 with a piece of barkcloth soaked in perfumed coconut oil and then released.
 The bird does not nest on Kambara today, but it occasionally comes from the
 neighboring island of Wangava, where it is common.

The forefather of Mbutonikoro clan of the chiefs' group on Mothe, accord-
 ing to the clan headman, was Ului Lakemba who came to the island six

769 It reinforced the desire for prestige, based on rank, success in
797 warfare and wealth, which gave the culture its definite secular
bias. These ancestor gods are still feared by many old Lauans
today.

769 The ancestor gods were worshipped in temples—small
346 thatched huts with disproportionately high gabled roofs and
778 oval shaped ground plan. The temples were elevated on stone-
793 flanked mounds surrounded by fragrant plants, for fragrance
was associated with sacredness in the minds of the natives. In
them were kept sacred objects belonging to the clan, such as
elaborately carved ceremonial clubs. A hereditary priest
officiated at each temple. He propitiated the gods with offer-
ings such as food, kava, whales' teeth, and human sacrifices,
especially the bodies of enemies captured in warfare. All that
remain today of these temples are the stone-flanked mounds on
which offerings are occasionally made secretly.

776 Most of the gods of the upper class were war gods. Before
726 a raid the priest consulted the war gods regarding the auspici-
793 ousness of an attack, and prayed that "mana" be granted the
clan warriors and their weapons. Without the approval of the
gods the raid would not be successful. If the god responded,
the priest's body began to twitch and shake. As the god
entered his body the priest writhed in grotesque contortions.
He was bathed in sweat. The movements became more and
more violent until finally in a queer shrill voice the god spoke
through the priest.

787 Williams gives the following account of this spirit possession.
793 "One who intends to consult the oracle dresses and oils himself
and, accompanied by a few others, goes to the priest . . .
When the party enters, he (the priest) rises, and sits so that his
back is near to the white cloth by which the god visits him,
while the others occupy the opposite side of the *mbure*
(temple). The principal person presents a whale's tooth,
states the purpose of the visit, and expresses a hope that the
god will regard him with favor. Sometimes there is placed